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Theorizing Change: Between Reflective Judgment and the Inertia of Political *Habitus*[*]

Abstract

In an effort to delineate a more plausible account of political change, this paper reads Pierre Bourdieu's social theory as a corrective to exaggerated enthusiasm about the emancipatory force of reflection. This revised account valorizes both Bourdieu's insights into the acquired, embodied, durable nature of the political *habitus* and judgment theorists' trust in individuals' reflection as a perpetual force of novelty and spontaneity in the public sphere of democratic societies. The main purpose of this exercise is to reveal the mix of continuity and discontinuity that is characteristic of most transformations in the political common sense of democratic societies. In other words, this paper seeks to offer a more complex understanding of the inertial character of reflective judgment and of the difficulty of shifting the categories that define the political common sense. By cross-pollinating the ever-growing literature on reflective judgment and Bourdieu's sombre theory of politics, we can better calibrate our expectations regarding the possibilities of significant democratic transformation in late capitalist societies.

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Key words

political change, political judgment, *habitus,* common sense, Bourdieu

Introduction

In criticizing the widely endorsed view that that the US has overcome institutional racial discrimination after Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander's provocative book, *The New Jim Crow* stirred vehement public debates.[1] Alexander argues against the political common sense according to which racial marginalisation is incompatible with colorblindness. On the contrary, she claims, the criteria of oppression have changed from Black/White to criminal/non-criminal, and Blacks continue to be disproportionately excluded from the exercise of certain rights. The author shows how, against the background of widespread – often less than fully conscious – racism, the penal system in the United States constitutes an efficient mechanism for depriving many Black men of full citizenship. Once processed by the courts, a high number are politically silenced for the rest of their lives, suffering from the severe socio-economic disadvantages related to being labelled a felon. The main problem, argues Alexander, is that the language of colorblindness is deceiving: it hides that, within all discontinuity, there is continuity. In spite of the success of the Civil Rights movement and the political achievements of the Black community, racism still permeates society and the institutions in ways that citizens, trapped in the common sense of colorblindness, cannot discern. The association of

criminality with the Black – politically fabricated by means of the 'War on Drugs' and cultivated by the media – has been internalized and embodied by a public who, often in spite of themselves, help reproduce discrimination. What is needed, Alexander writes, is a *prise de conscience* by all members of the community, a strong social movement that could provoke a shift in the categories of the political common sense. Upon reflection, anybody can understand the function criminal law performs in the US. The author therefore urges Black organizations to move beyond the celebration of the Civil Rights movement, resist the force of 'Black success' tokenism, and think about how the disenfranchising machine can be stopped.

Alexander's study is a good starting point for this paper because it highlights the complex nature of political change in democracy. She highlights patters of injustice obscured by a problematic common sense and hopes that the categories through which we see the political world are permeable to reflection. In this paper, I build on Alexander's insights and rigorously theorize both her 'diagnosis' and her 'therapy'. Thus, I will argue that Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* is an important theoretical tool for enriching and calibrating theories that consider reflection to be the main force behind meaningful political transformations.

Bourdieu's sociological work has inspired a massive literature that seeks to refine or disprove his conclusions[2]. In the last few decades, his work has also been of great interest to political theorists who see an ally in sociology.[3] This paper aims to mobilize

some of the theoretical resources Bourdieu's work offers, without violating his injunction against theory for theory's sake. By bringing together the literature on the centrality of reflective judgment for democratic renewal and Bourdieu's social theory, I delineate an account of political change that fructifies both his insights into the acquired, embodied, durable nature of the political *habitus* and judgment theorists' trust in the emancipatory force of reflection.

The first section is dedicated to that view of politics that takes reflective judgment to be the essential faculty for democratic citizenship. Next, I outline Bourdieu's theory of political agency and his grim account of politics. The third section sketches a hybrid account of political change. The conclusion briefly explains why this middle position is more plausible – and critically useful – than either an exaggerated optimism in reflection or an exaggerated pessimism in obstacles to it.

The transformational power of reflection

Building on Kant and Aristotle – and on the appropriation of these thinkers by Arendt and Gadamer – numerous political theorists have recently been working on delineating a theory of political reflective judgment[4]. In what follows, I will outline their theory of political change by introducing the main ideas they generally share, while also highlighting some of the most relevant differences.

Reflective judgment refers to the individual's capacity to judge particulars as particulars, and not by subsumption to a principle, rule, formula, etc. The crucial distinction for this literature is the Kantian one between determinant judgment – the faculty that enables us to apply pre-given norms to a concrete situation – and reflective judgement, which works within the complexity of the situation and attempts to derive the general from within the particular. Given that politics is the realm of the contingent, of the spontaneous and of the complex, where no precise, easily applicable rules are available, reflective judgment is conceived to be the political faculty *par excellence*. Through reflective judgment, citizens bring novelty into the political space. And while thinking creatively is an ever-present feature of democratic politics, in times of political and economic crisis, when old models no longer serve us, it is particularly important.

These preliminary remarks make it somewhat clear that deliberative democrats and political liberals do not fall within this theoretical camp.[5] While it has been argued that Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls can be seen as part of a general 'turn to judgment' in contemporary political theory[6], this paper argues that their quasi-transcendentalism and their over-reliance on determinant moral judgment makes their assimilation to the reflective judgment orientation difficult.[7]

In spite of very sophisticated theoretical differences – to which I cannot do justice here – judgment theorists agree that reflective judgment might serve as an antidote to the depoliticization of the public sphere of democratic societies. In a globalized,

bureaucratized, technologized world, the opportunities to participate in decision-making are rare for ordinary citizens. Moreover, in times of crisis, 'specialists' becomes more powerful. Technocrats are often seen as 'saviours' when the time for politics is declared to have passed. Exceptional times are thought to require exceptional (i.e. non-democratic) solutions. In contrast, theorists of judgment clamour for a new conception of democratic citizenship, one that recognizes all citizens' capacity to exercise political judgment, to make decisions in the absence of formulae. Crisis is a time for innovation and for novelty, for new ways of thinking about 'our' shared world. And, since everyone has the capacity to judge 'without banisters', citizens must re-appropriate politics and not let themselves be transformed into customers or patients.

Political life is therefore centred on deliberations over what citizens – who share a set of common meanings – consider as objects of common concern. Through involvement in deliberation, they become experienced in public affairs and learn how to pause, to place themselves in the shoes of others, mobilize prior experience, ponder alternative courses of action, and make decisions together. The Arendtian idea of 'enlarged mentality' – of 'going visiting' – underlies the fact that political judgments are not merely idiosyncratic, but are validated intersubjectively.[8] The wider the scope of my enlarged mentality – the higher the number of individuals who are present and whose standpoint I try to occupy in making a decision – the greater the generality of my judgment.[9] And it is imagination that allows us to 'go visiting' and understand how a

problem looks from the perspective of the others – with whom we may, or may not agree.[10] Only if one 'trains one's imagination to go visiting'[11] can one become aware of new and unforeseeable possibilities for the political life. Taking distance from one's particular position, acting with responsive flexibility, and being open to a respectful engagement with difference are the main virtues of a good judge.

It must be emphasized that the capacity for political judgment can only be developed in the company of others, within efforts of making sense of the world together. Formal education does play a role – strengthening the capacity to enlarge one's mentality implies some theoretical knowledge – but it is the everyday engagement with different standpoints that enables the cultivation of judgement. We are not born practical judges, we become practical judges,[12] through active processing of bad and good experience alike.[13] Beside experience, familiarity with narratives – both lessons to be learnt and cautionary tales – is a crucial part of cultivating good judgment. Stories increase sensitivity and receptivity[14]: they are full of ambiguities that demand hermeneutic effort and stimulate the imagination towards new possibilities.[15]

Yet,

> [F]or judgment to be at all possible, there must be standards of judgment, and this implies a community of judgement, that is, agreement in judgments at a deeper level that grounds those at the level of ordinary political argument. In this sense, discourse rests upon an underlying substratum of agreement in judgments. The very

possibility of communication means that disagreement and conflict are grounded in a deeper unity.[16]

While not strictly determined by principles, political judgment does not happen in a vacuum: agents must take into account the existing institutional structure as well as the inherited categories through which the community 'sees' the world. In the absence of 'our' historically grounded prejudices, judging is impossible. Through experiences that we share with the others, we partake into a *political common sense*. Political change happens oriented – yet not determined – by the pool of shared truths or the common sense that the community takes for granted.[17]

The nature of common sense is intensively debated between scholars of judgment, with thicker and thinner accounts being proposed. Because of space limitations, this paper will only review three representative positions in order to give the reader a sense of their range. At one end of the continuum, authors argue that, in order for *political* judgment to resonate with those I encounter in the public sphere, it must be based on a substantive, fundamental agreement. Ronald Beiner proposes that, in the absence of the cultural-political background of a real community, the universal faculty of judgment is lacking in cognitive sources.[18] Political experience is acquired within *real* public spheres, through encounters with *real* others, and it is by reference to the rather thick common sense of a political community of actors that we can distinguish between good and bad, between informed and uninformed judgment.

Since good judgment depends on the experience of the public sphere populated by the different others, individuals are not equally good judges. Good judges

> 'may be journalists, diplomats, or statesmen, historians or ordinary citizens, and they may even be political theorists and philosophers, although theoretical insight is by no means a guarantee of political judgment, for the mastery of universals is quite distinct from the capacity for recognizing particulars'[19].

Such individuals balance a critical detachment from the passion and prejudice surrounding pressing issues and a long and rich experience in the contexts at stake. Thus, they serve as examples for others to learn from. Their comprehensive understanding of human needs, desires, capacities, and frailty gives an inspiring quality to their verdicts.

Within this thicker, cultural understanding of the common sense, change is also possible as allegiances to different communities pull the person in different directions, often destabilising her sense of identity. Even totalitarian regimes allow for sub-communities of resistance, to say nothing of the diversity that flourishes in democracies[20]. While not easily, one can resist – and judge against one's own community – by making reference to the common sense of another community of judgment. Jenny Nedelsky proposes actual communities or imagined communities that one constructs on the basis of past experience, or communities encountered in one's education in books and teachings as potential sources of an alternative community of

judgement.[21] Therefore, at a deeper level, political change is possible when the marginalized can formulate their own – alternative – common sense. Provided they manage to successfully woo the agreement of others and challenge the mainstream/dominant common sense of the body politic, more profound political transformations can occur.

Moving along the continuum, Alessandro Ferrara attempts to escape the twin extremes of too thick or too thin notions of the common sense and proposes an account thereof as both located within a particular political identity and informed by 'a universal capacity to sense the flourishing and human life and what favours it'[22]. Ferrara conceptualizes exemplary judgment as the main engine of political change.[23] Exemplary judgment is both backward looking – in that it takes into account the history, the institutions and the laws of the particular political community within which it takes place – and forward looking – in that it seeks to contribute to the flourishing of human lives beyond the constraints of that community.[24] The flourishing of human life is marked by several criteria: *coherence*, which refers to a life's cohesion around a recognizable and narratable project; *vitality*, which includes feelings of self-esteem, an interest in one's life and a perception of oneself as living a real – as opposed to a false – life; *depth*, which is a capacity to understand the construction of one's own identity through self-knowledge and self-reflection; and *maturity*, which can be roughly understood as realism in our encounter to a world that does not easily ply to our wishes

and fantasies.[25] To the extent a judgment – a political decision, policy, legislation – moves our imagination to see how we can flourish as humans beyond the confines of our local identity and along these dimensions, it becomes exemplary. Charisma, the use of rhetoric, and the ability to mobilize are additional ingredients for ensuring the persuasiveness of exemplary judgments within their particular communities.[26]

Ferrara thinks democracies are fertile grounds for political innovation through exemplarity because their political identity is mapped by several propitious factors: a passion for the common good, a passion for equality, a passion for individuality and a passion for openness.[27] The last two passions are particularly important for the purpose of this paper, as they highlight the trust the author has in the power of reflection to fuel change-inducing exemplary judgment. Building on various historical and contemporary sources in political theory, Ferrara thinks the passion for individuality is marked by independent thinking and creativity, by a disposition to disobey bad conventions and unjust laws on the basis of one's critical assessment. It presupposes the courage to live as a self-created being – rather than a conditioned, manipulated one.[28] The passion for openness refers to receptiveness to novelty and experimentation, to going off the beaten track and venturing into the unknown in solving problems. It amounts to a preference for reflectiveness and learning and for destabilising old patterns as a means for innovation. When anchored in these passions and oriented – not determined – by a universally available sense of human flourishing, political judgments can provide

citizens with a vision for transformation: they 'illuminate new ways of transcending the limitations of what is and expanding the reach of our normative understandings'.[29]

Our brief excursus into the range of notions of common sense offered by theorists of judgment ends with Albena Azmanova's work, which proposes the thinnest account of the three. In contrast to Beiner's thick hermeneutic horizon and Ferrara's double concern with the local identities and the flourishing of human life, Azmanova conceptualizes the common sense minimally, as a shared matrix of relevance[30] or *orientational phronesis*:

> […] in order for judgement and deliberation to be possible, there must be tacit agreements on which concepts and arguments are relevant to a debate about justice, and what actors are identified as legitimate parties to these interactions. There is also often tacit agreement on which issues, identities, and interests to dismiss as irrelevant to public debates on justice; they are simply omitted from the very terms in which debates are cast.[31]

This deep agreement – underlying the possibility of discrete agreements and disagreements in everyday interactions – is the expression neither of cultural horizons, nor of a universal sense of human flourishing, but of the individuals' practical experience of the social order. From this experience they derive a common matrix of meaning and salience – of the issues that are noteworthy for our political debates, irrespective of what we believe about them individually – that makes deliberative

encounters possible. Gender, the mode of production, race, are just some examples of possible coordinates in the shared framework of reference.

For Azmanova, political change is perpetually possible as the matrix of relevance is fluid and flexible, vulnerable to internal contestation. Deliberative conflicts can trigger legitimation crises and provoke significant transformation within the paradigm of political relevance. On an individual level, the very encounter of alterity makes citizens reflect on their own beliefs. Giving an account of the ways in which one has reached a certain opinion – of one's reasons to have reasons – is the best safeguard against the distortive force of external influences on the capacity to judge and a stepping stone for the possibility of critique and change.[32]

As has become clear by now, despite their differences, theorists of judgment agree that the fundamental source of change within communities of judgment ultimately lies with the public encounters between reflective agents. Under conditions of pluralism, visiting the perspective of those with whom we disagree enlarges our mentality and ensures validity for our political judgments. Exemplars, alternative communities of judgment, an idea of human flourishing or a matrix of reference can guide – without determining – political judgment and function as sources of political transformations. To the extent that judgments garner public support, woo the consent of the others and inspires them, the common sense of the community can be changed.

The following section will reconstruct Bourdieu's account of politics and political change as it emerges from his complex social theory. As will become evident, his notion of *habitus* can help calibrate our hopes in the transformational force of reflection, thus pushing us towards a more plausible theory of political change.

Habitus between appropriateness and extravagance

Bourdieu's social theory is a rich corpus, developed in the course of many years of empirical and theoretical work. In the *The Logic of Practice* he offers the most condensed treatment of *habitus*, the concept on which he tries to build a middle position between objectivist and subjectivist accounts of social reality[33]. On the one hand, subjectivists are bound to understand action as the deliberate, conscious, rational pursuit of a goal. On the other hand, objectivists reject the individuals' and groups' practical knowledge as unreliable and conceive of action as a mechanical reaction to stimuli. Bourdieu argues that both perspectives fail to account for the very condition of the possibility of social experience, which is the overlapping of objective and internalized structures, of *field* and *habitus*:

> The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce the *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively

> adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.[34]

In other words, the world presents us with *fields* defined as sets of possibilities and impossibilities, opportunities and obstacles, which in time generate dispositions that allow us to adapt to external constraints and live meaningful social lives. The *field* is where individuals seek to influence the distribution of various forms of capital, e.g. wealth in the economic field or knowledge and degrees in the cultural field. Our *habitus* is a set of durable dispositions, which are the product of past experience and which constitute the foundation of all our future perceptions, evaluations, thoughts, and actions. As such, *habitus* ensures the 'appropriateness' or the 'fit' between our actions and appraisals, on the one hand, and the objective social world – the *fields* – within which we live, on the other. By limiting the range of possible futures we can pursue, *habitus* helps reproduce the very conditions whose product it is. In other words, in internalizing the limits that objective structures set for our plans, we help reproduce those very structures. *Habitus* is thus a self-generative force, behind which there is no master puppeteer.

Similar social conditions give rise to collective *habitus,* class and gender being the clearest examples[35]. As the unconscious 'second nature', it grounds a practical sense for the group and its members, a sense that emerges without any calculation or conscious reference to a norm. In Bourdieu's words, '(t)he practices of the members of the same

group or, in a differentiated society, of the same class, are always more and better harmonized than the agents know or wish'.[36] Given that public institutions still hold a privileged position in inculcating norms within the population, the *habitus* is largely national.[37] The state – mainly through the school and the bureaucracy, but not only – produces and inculcates the cognitive structures through which the social world is perceived and incorporated. These categories are spontaneously applied to the social reality – and to the state itself – by successfully socialized citizens. The state's very legitimacy depends on the successful imposition of these categories on the social reality and citizens' mental structures and representations, who themselves unconsciously reproduce these categories in their daily interactions.[38]

When the internalized, embodied structures correspond to the objective structures, individuals unconsciously feel 'at home' and know how to 'play the game'. That is to say, they have a *practical sense*: they successfully navigate the social world by undisputedly adhering to systems of classification that appear *natural* to them. Improvisation, creation, innovation result in tune with the societal common sense, when individuals master the practical sense necessary for being 'successful'.

Common sense – what Bourdieu calls *doxa* – refers exactly to those truths that are taken for granted in a society:

> Common sense is a stock of self-evidences shared by all, which, within the limits of a social universe, ensures a primordial consensus on the meaning of

> the world, a set of tacitly accepted commonplaces which make confrontation, dialogue, competition and even conflict possible, and among which a special place must be reserved for the principles of classification, such as the major oppositions structuring the perception of the world.[39]

The practical sense also has a bodily dimension. The body is mnemonic: the *habitus* is inscribed in one's posture, gestures, dress, accent, bearing, manners, beyond the grasp of consciousness, explicitness, or deliberate transformation. Language – one's grammar, use of slang, scope of vocabulary, accent – constitutes one of the most important media of distinction. The language that wins the struggle for dominance within a political community becomes the official, 'natural language', a process that diminishes the authority of all those who do not speak it correctly. Differences in speech reflect the social position of the speaker (gender, class, education, ethnicity) and are symptomatic of the overall uneven distribution of various forms of capital. Those who possess sufficient linguistic capital in the official language dominate the formal institutions, while those who speak what is derogatorily called 'popular' language either strive anxiously 'to fit' by mimicking the more competent speakers, or exclude themselves from public debates.[40]

The role language plays in legitimizing some speakers – and delegitimizing others – is emblematic of how an entire worldview and its categories of distinction are inscribed in the body through socialization, appropriation, and conditioning.[41] The problem is not

that individuals are victims of ideological manipulation, but that, by incorporating custom and habit, by spontaneously adjusting their expectations to their chances of success in the various fields, they are complicit in the maintenance of the *status quo*. Power works invisibly, and with the complicity of the subjects who, in calibrating their reactions to the fields in which they function, reproduce social hierarchies and structures:

> The practical sense is not so much a state of mind as it is a state of body, a state of being. It is because the body has become a repository of ingrained dispositions that certain actions, certain ways of behaving and responding, seem altogether natural.[42]

Because one's schemes of perception, expectations, aspirations, and the scope of one's imagination are determined by one's position in the social structures, the world and the opportunities it offers look different for the dominated and for the dominant, Bourdieu thinks awareness raising is not enough to effect a change in the *habitus*. Being embodied and often beyond the reach of reflection, dispositions do not easily lend themselves to transformation through argumentation.

This account of the *habitus* underlies a bleak vision of politics. Like theorists of judgment, Bourdieu believes the political field is the site where agents fight over the construction and imposition of a certain vision of society. At the same time, it is the site of the struggle for the control of public powers (state administration). But, because capital (economic, cultural, symbolic) and leisure are not distributed evenly within the

citizenry, disadvantaged individuals are divested of the resources necessary for developing the kind of practical sense that would enable them to engage meaningfully in politics.[43]

Bourdieu argues that we live in a world where politics is confined to a group of professional politicians coming from a class that enjoys considerable economic resources, well-reputed academic degrees, and the associated social prestige.[44] In contemporary democracies, the non-professionals 'exist' politically on condition of being represented by the professionals, thus finding themselves in a bind. On the one hand, they accede to legitimate public decision-making only by delegation and representation, which implies their being dispossessed of their own particular speech. On the other hand, should ordinary citizens decide that they no longer identify with the speech of the representative, they can protest by withdrawing their votes, but only at the cost of losing any type of voice in formal settings. Whatever they do, the result is political dispossession.[45]

In contrast with the voicelessness of the ordinary citizen, the *habitus* of the professional politician and of the technocrat is the result of a special training. They constitute the state nobility[46] who has specific knowledge of concepts, traditions, rhetoric, and, most importantly, a practical sense of the field: the feel of the political game and its inherent limits. An *esoteric culture* thus dominates politics, i.e. a culture of problems, issues, practices disconnected from the experience of ordinary citizens.[47]

For Bourdieu, like for theorists of judgments, technocrats pose a particular challenge. They are highly educated individuals who have made the transition from the scientific field to the state or the market and who seek to reduce politics to management and unique solutions. In possession of high levels of cultural capital, they stiffly debates sense in the name of scientificity.[48]

Given their pernicious influence of technocrats within the general state of political dispossession, what are the possibilities for meaningful political change? According to Bourdieu, for change to be possible two conditions need to obtain: the overlapping of a crisis in the objective structure and the flourishing of a critical intellectual discourse. Extraordinary political situations – political revolutions or crisis in the mode of production – require an extraordinary language, capable of offering a new common sense, one that publicly articulates the previously tacit or repressed experiences of groups. Heretical languages undermine the common sense, transgressing it by naming *the unnameable*, i.e. the arbitrary lines along which the social world is structured. According to Bourdieu, one can modify social reality by modifying the agents' representation of it and, in this sense, words do 'wreak havoc'. Hierarchical relations and arbitrary social boundaries are vulnerable to the destructive effect of words, which expose and disenchant, and this vulnerability increases in moments of crisis, when new vocabularies enter a competition for the privilege of articulating the new, unheard-of possibilities.[49]

But who are the heretics who can use words effectively? In Bourdieu's view, a change in arbitrary categories cannot come from the dominated: they are the product of this very world and hence they don't question it. Their critical competence is very limited and their *habitus* prevents an awakening of conscience. Intellectuals, on the contrary, because of their historical 'interest in disinterestedness', enjoy a special authority within the field of power. Bourdieu is not naïve enough to believe in the purity of the intellectual or the full autonomy of the intellectual field. He provides extensive analyses of how money and politics encroach on this autonomy and split the field between those who live up to the principle of autonomy and those who do not.[50] Moreover, like any other field, art and science feature their own internal relations of domination. However, because of a fundamental commitment to autonomy that is central to the intellectuals' identity and because intellectuals are in a relation of homology with the politically dominated, they will be inclined to articulate a systematic critique of the social order, revealing the exclusions hidden in the political common sense.[51]

This critique is made possible by the fact that reflective analysis – the effort to step back from one's dispositions and control the first impulse of the habitus by consciously inhibiting it[52] – is a special prerogative of the intellectual, and in particular of the sociologist.[53] The intellectual problematizes her own position in the academic and political fields and studies it with critical detachment – in the same way she studies any

other scientific object.[54] For Bourdieu, reflection is not the practical and universal capacity celebrated by theorists of judgment, but part of a certain type of habitus, the scientific habitus. Only those who enjoy high levels of cultural capital, who can turn themselves into objects of scientific study, and who have autonomy at the centre of their identity can attain sufficient levels of self-reflectivity.[55]

By virtue of their habitus and position, intellectuals can also unmask the exclusions hidden by the commons sense and propose alternative visions. Consequently, their political mission is to denaturalize the world, i.e. to politicize it by exposing the conditions that perpetuate domination – in the world and in the mind – and for this purpose empirical and theoretical work should go hand in hand.[56]

Given the dominance of technocrats and the multitude of threats to the autonomy of the cultural field, Bourdieu argues that a trans-national collective of intellectuals, combining the skills of all specific intellectuals, will be more efficient in challenging the political common sense during moments of crisis.[57] The collective intellectual is not a mysterious entity. A research centre is one of the forms it can take and Bourdieu encourages networks of communication between such centres beyond national boundaries.[58] To the extent that intellectuals manage to secure their political and economic independence, they can provide the critique that opens the path for alternative visions of the common world. By conducting research on new forms of political action and political mobilization, by respecting the institutionalized forms of reliability in the

scientific field, and by taking control of the means of scientific production and ratification, the collective intellectual lives up to the idea of politically committed scholarship.[59]

Having briefly outlines the view of change Bourdieu provides, the paper now moves to cross-pollinate his views on the embodied, durable and inertial *habitus* with the more optimistic views introduced in the previous section.

Towards a more plausible account of political change

There are a number of theoretical and programmatic affinities between judgment theorists, on the one hand, and Bourdieu, on the other.[60] In what follows, I first discuss their affinities. I then move on to an assessment of the vulnerability of the representative accounts outlined in the first section to Bourdieu's criticisms. Last but not least, I bring them in conversation with a view to offering a hybrid account of political change, one that combines judgment theorists' view of the possibilities of novelty in democratic politics and Bourdieu's somber observations about the inertia of the common sense.

Theorists of judgment and Bourdieu share a concern with the confiscation of democratic politics by technocrats and professionals. Citizens have been recently been turned into clients, silenced and disenfranchised, deprived of opportunities to voice their concerns. The need to reclaim politics emerges from the texts of all the authors studied here.

For theorists of judgment, change, novelty and spontaneity are always possible, as long as there is a public sphere where talk goes on incessantly. If citizens come together and exercise their faculty of reflection, if they enlarge their perspective and manage to see the issues from a variety of standpoints, they will perpetually discover new possibilities for their shared political life. This is why training one's imagination to go visiting constitutes an essential precondition for democratic dialogue in pluralistic societies.

Bourdieu is less enthusiastic about the possibility of change and his criticism touches all the representative positions presented above, though not equally. In agreement with theorists of judgment, he states that the common sense enables political action by providing basic categories. And he does agree that individuals feel at ease in the world when they have accumulated enough practical experience: navigating the social world becomes less conscious and more intuitive. The problem is that, in late capitalist, diverse societies, the conditions for acquiring an effective political sense are unevenly distributed and that arbitrary categories of distinction are internalized and reproduced by the dominated, to their own disadvantage. Thus, Bourdieu's account of the arbitrariness of the naturalized doxic distinctions and of their stability in the citizens' *habitus* invites us to question the optimism of judgment theorists along several lines.

First, we must problematize the very categories through which the citizens see the world. Their naturalization undermines the democratic processes because it splits the public into islands. Therefore, 'going visiting' is likely to happen within the zone in which the individual feels comfortable, i.e. one visits those with whom one shares a social island. The privileged cultivate relations with their peers, while the unprivileged are persuaded that politics is not 'for the likes of us,' thereby excluding themselves from contestation. Imagination – the creative force hailed by theorists of judgment – can also be a force in service of the *status quo*, confined to what the *doxa* permits as thinkable. Going back to the example at the beginning of this paper, the internalization of the ideal of colorblindness obscures massive inequities within the citizenry and hinders the expansion of the enlarged mentality to include the standpoints of those bearing the labels of 'felon' and 'criminal'. What is more, even if one could train the imagination to go visiting beyond one's class, gender, group, etc., in visiting, one would still work with the naturalized categories that dictate what is 'appropriate' for individuals – for the educated, for the rich, for the criminals, for women, for homosexuals, etc. – to aspire to.

Second, while the capacity to judge political particulars 'without banisters' must be cultivated, while the public space must be preserved for incessant talk to flourish, we must also be attentive to the profile of the active citizen and see what structural factors make some more likely to engage in deliberation than others. With Alexander, we must also pay attention to the ways in which naturalized inequalities systematically cause

some political agents to enjoy authority, while disenfranchising and relegating others to second-class status. And this involves, beyond the distribution of various forms of capital, a consideration of the bodily aspect of citizenship. Our body, as much as our words, discloses who we are: clothing, manners, gestures, accent, vocabulary, bearing, posture. We 'code' and 'classify' our fellow citizens – as respectable, authoritative, wise but also dangerous, stupid, irrelevant, etc. – according to their clothing, manners, gestures, accent, vocabulary, bearing, posture. While some theorists of judgment do recognize the role of the body in judgments,[61] efforts must be made to think about how the disposition to listen to the different other, to reflect and act in the world, can be stimulated in its complexity. Without carefully identifying the social markers of authoritative political participation – and the way in which they reflect arbitrary distributions of economic, political, cultural, linguistic, symbolic, etc. capital – we cannot begin the work of universalizing the conditions of access to politics.

Third, related but not reducible to the body, emotions should also be taken into account. Emotion is one of the most important markers of judgment: it gets judgment going and we judge about the things we care. Emotion also helps us select the elements that go into judgment according to their salience. Not feeling psychologically at ease debating with the more educated, the more articulate, the more authoritative others might – at least partly – explain why some citizens withdraw from political decision-making. Alternatively, experiencing emotional discomfort in the presence of women,

immigrants, gays, Blacks, ex-convicts or the poor, disables one's capacity to place oneself in their shoes. The emotional anchorage of the exclusionary *habitus* contributes to its stability. Therefore, if we agree with Bourdieu that emotion and the body are an important part of the political *habitus*, cultivating emotions that are welcoming to difference must become a part of a complex understanding of democratic socialization.[62]

Fourth, while theorists of judgments like Beiner and Ferrara are right to discuss the power of exemplary acts and persons as catalysers of change, we must concede the difficulty of exemplarity. First, we need to consider the strong inertial pull of the habitus on one's capacity to take distance from the immediate context. If we endorse Bourdieu's account of the naturalized nature of the habitus and its group-based character (according to gender, class, etc.), then Ferrara's passion for individuality is likely to push the individual to go very narrowly off the 'beaten track' – that of her relevant social island. Moreover, the passion for openness that Ferrara celebrates will also meet strong psychological and physical barriers as citizens feel uncomfortable outside the social, political and cultural zone they 'naturally' take for granted. This means that reaching for that universal sense of what furthers the flourishing of human life – beyond the confines of one's particular community – will not happen as spontaneously as Ferrara intimates[63].

Moreover, one's position in the political field determines not only whether one can judge exemplarily, but also the kind of reception exemplary judgments get. On the one hand, exemplary judgments shaking the basic categories at the core of the social world might be felt as threatening, and might therefore lead to a conservative backlash. On the other hand, feeling disempowered and alienated from politics and from one's fellow citizens may make one less responsive to provocative reflections, no matter how inspiring they might be.

It must be mentioned at this point that that theorists of judgment are not equally vulnerable to Bourdieu's critical sting. Of the three representative accounts discussed in the first part of this paper, Azmanova alone thematizes the power asymmetries inscribed in the societal matrix of relevance.[64] In contrast to Beiner and Ferrara, she is very much aware of the ways in which the meaning and the valuation ascribed to an issue within the societal matrix of relevance are determined by structures of domination. More importantly, Azmanova uses Bourdieu's notion of *prise de position* to explain that a political actor's position-taking within the matrix of relevance is the expression of that actor's position within the overall distribution of social capital. In this respect, Azmanova and Bourdieu are in agreement. However, she maintains a firm belief that the solution lies with the flexibility and instability of the matrix, which she sees as forever vulnerable to the power of discursive confrontations[65]. Azmanova argues that, in encountering alterity, citizens cannot but distance themselves from their own position

and revise it. Moreover, to the extent that they give a public account of how they reached the opinion they bring to the public sphere, they will reveal the power relations at play in deliberation and will help dereify the common sense.

While Bourdieu would salute Azmanova's attention to the political and arbitrary nature of the common sense, he would be skeptical of her understanding of the nature of the *habitus* and of the *doxa*. Azmanova's treatment of Bourdieu is rather incomplete as she does not seem to appreciate how deep the *habitus* runs and of how difficult it would be for a person to give an account of the reasons for having reasons – the one solution she proposes against the distorting effect of domination. Bourdieu would point to the fact that encounters with alterity do not automatically stimulate reflection – rather, they may provoke resistance and discomfort. He would also be quick to remark that one's *habitus* – and the reasons for which we have the political opinions we have – is embodied: the sum of stable, incorporated dispositions through which the individual finds a home in the world is not as transparent to reflection and as discursively available as Azmanova presupposes. Therefore, there is no guarantee that politically dispossessed citizens will be in a position to give an account of how they formulated the political opinions they expound. And even if they could expose the origins of their opinions, there is no guarantee they will not be disregarded by their fellow citizens, on account of their linguistic capacities, skin color, gender, class, education, and other forms of distinction. This means that, because she does not fully engage with the *habitus* as

conceptualised by Bourdieu, Azmanova overestimates the flexibility and vulnerability of the matrix of relevance to contestation. Thinking again about the example at the beginning of this paper, even if 'felons' and 'criminals' were to give an account of the genesis of their own political opinions – as she recommends – their accounts are not certain to reveal the structural injustices obscured by the language of 'colorblindness', nor are they likely to be considered as authoritative within the American public sphere, dominated as it is by the common sense of individual responsibility – in merit and fault alike.

While relying on Bourdieu to highlight the obstacles that the different accounts of judgment are likely to face when it comes to political change, this paper does not, however, endorse his idea that mastery of scientific knowledge is a pre-requisite for understanding the oppressive character of the common sense. In agreement with theorists of judgment, it argues that theoretical knowledge is an important, but not the only dimension of a good judgment. As social movements have shown, unmasking the injustice of categories is not the exclusive privilege of intellectuals. Radical thought flourishes outside research centers, in alternative, politically mobilized communities of judgment. True, intellectuals have a critical role in articulating heretical languages, and the more they hold each other accountable the better; but they do not have a monopoly over exemplary judgments, nor is experience in sociological research a condition for changing the terms of the discourse. The Madres de Plaza de Mayo, the Solidarność or

Occupy Wall Street are just some of the most inspiring examples of critical judgment coming from outside the academia.

Besides social movements, theorists of judgment are right to point to powerful art (films, theatre, and painting) as another source of exemplary reflective judgments, more direct and more effective in revealing oppression and changing the way in which we see the world than either social science or philosophy. Examples abound. Just think of the debates sparked by Thomas Bernhard's *Heldenplatz*, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mocking Bird,* or Louis Malle's *Lacombe, Lucien.*[66] These artistic products have challenged the terms of the debates in their respective societies. In celebrating the power of art to destabilize dominant views of the community, we must, however, follow Bourdieu and resist the myth of 'pure' art. It is exactly because it is made possible by – and located within – a historical constellation, that art can be politically relevant. And it is only when it is produced by artists committed to intellectual autonomy that that art can also be critical[67].

However, even if, in disagreeing with Bourdieu's trust in scientific self-objectification, we point to the reflective practices of social movements and art in, we should embrace his idea that reflection by the good judge must go beyond taking distance from the particular situation at hand. A more complex understanding of good judgment should involve, besides 'going visiting', turning the gaze upon oneself and taking some distance – even if not scientific distance – from one's own position as a

speaker with authority within the public sphere. To illustrate, in *The New Jim Crow* Alexander is painfully aware of her position as a privileged, highly educated, beneficiary of affirmative action, and she writes in full awareness of the authority and advantage this gives her. She is aware of belonging to a class of intellectuals with high cultural capital. By looking at oneself with a critical eye, the judge can become aware of the social position that allows her to speak authoritatively in the public sphere and ask herself some crucial questions: 'Who do I speak for? What entitles me to speak with authority? Why do people pay attention to me? Who is likely to take me seriously? On what kind of privilege is my ability to speak and access to the public realm based on?' These are questions that all citizens, and not just intellectuals, should aim to answer for themselves whenever they enter the public arena and try to persuade the others of the merits of their arguments.

This section ends with a word on crisis. Alexander, Bourdieu and theorists of judgment see crisis as an opportunity for radical political change, for embracing a different view of the world. For Bourdieu, political change comes with changes in the objective world, accompanied by a surge in heretical languages. Like Arendt and other theorists of judgment, he thinks that crisis in the world brings about the crisis of the categories through which we understand the world. Given the arbitrariness of these categories, their loss is not something to be deplored, but an opportunity to be seized.

Crisis is a time propitious for alternative languages to make explicit the relations of dominations hidden by the societal common sense.

Indeed, crises are crucial for they show the limits of our inherited and cherished categories. But, more often than not, radical change happens piecemeal. Because they allow of a multitude of communities of judgment, and for good political judgment to develop beyond the academia, theorists of judgment are more comfortable with the idea that important change also happens gradually, through struggles that span across decades – the case of women and gay people's liberation being illustrative in this sense. Fetishizing the crisis and presenting intellectuals as heroic providers of a new common sense distracts us from the more mundane dynamic of political change. This is why, while it is important that we allow Bourdieu to curb our over-inflated enthusiasm in the power of reflection, we should not join him in his elitist heroism.

Conclusions

In building a dialogue between those I have generically called theorists of judgment and Pierre Bourdieu, this paper's ambition has been to point to a twin danger: of exaggerated optimism in the power of reflection to trigger significant political change *or* of exaggerated pessimism about the stability of arbitrary social distinctions. In times of great democratic deficits, characterized by the hi-jacking of democratic processes by experts, it is crucial that political theory abstains from both temptations. A middle

position, that acknowledges the obstacles to reflection while also cultivating hope in its power, is more likely to provide useful and realistic insights into the conundrum democracies face in the age of post-politics.

Notwithstanding Bourdieu's correct assessment of the difficulty of reflection to reveal new possibilities for the political life, the impact of social movements and of exemplary works of art gives us reasons to believe there is hope beyond the scientific community. Social movements abound and their contribution does not depend on input from intellectuals, but on the reproduction of a *habitus* of social activism[68]. Without discarding the importance of theoretical knowledge, a democratic *habitus* can emerge from socialization in the importance of social mobilization, rather than from the mastery of scientific methodology. Secondly, good stories and art are possibly more apt than social science to disrupt the 'subtle embodied dynamics that perpetuate domination and oppression in ostensibly free societies'.[69] By using the social theorist's work as a corrective – rather than a substitute – to over-enthusiastic hopes in the emancipatory force of reflective judgment, I hope to have pointed towards a more plausible account of political change.

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[1] Michelle Alexander (2010) *The New Jim Crow.* New York: New Press. The impact of the book cannot be explained by the novelty of the data, but by the way in which the author framed the issue. By 2010 many studies had amply documented the

discriminatory impact of the American carceral system. See Glen C. Loury (2002) *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality.* Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press; Bruce Western (2007) *Punishment and Inequality in America.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation; Vesla M. Weaver and Amy E. Lerman (2010) 'Political Consequences of the Carceral State', *American Political Science Review* 104: 817-833. Bourdieu's student and collaborator, Loïc Wacquant is one of the most important scholars who researched this issues. See Loïc Wacquant (1999) *Les prisons de la misère*. Paris: Éditions Raisons d'Agir; 'Racial Stigma in the Making of the Punitive State', in Glenn C. Loury (ed.) (2008), with Pamela Karlan, Tommie Shelby, and Loïc Wacquant, *Race, Incarceration and American Values*, pp. 59-70. Cambridge: MIT Press; (2008) 'Ordering Insecurity: Social Polarization and the Punitive Upsurge', *Radical Philosophy Review* 11: 9–27; (2010) 'Class, Race and Hyperincarceration in Revanchist America', *Daedalus* 140: 74–90.

[2] More recently see Christian Fuchs (2003) 'Some Implications of Pierre *Bourdieu*'s Works for a Theory of Social Self-Organization', *European Journal of Social Theory* 6(4): 387–408; David L. Schwarts and Vera L. Zolberg (eds.) (2004). *After Bourdieu: Influence, Critique, Elaboration*. Kluwer Academic Publishers; **Loïc Wacquant (ed.) (2005). *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics: The Mystery of Ministry.* Cambridge: Polity;** Jeremy Lane (2006). *Bourdieu's Politics*. New York: Routledge;

Terry Lovell (ed.) (2007). *(Mis)recognition, Social Inequality and Social Justice*. New York: Routledge; Samer Frangie (2009) 'Bourdieu's Reflexive Politics: Socio-Analysis, Biography and Self-Creation', *European Journal of Social Theory* 12: 213–229.

[3] Critics of deliberative democracy use Bourdieu's account of linguistic *habitus* to scrutinize inequalities in deliberative capacities: Clarissa Hayward (2004). 'Doxa and Deliberation', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 7(1): 1–24; **Albena Azmanova (2012). *The Scandal of Reason.* New York NY: Columbia University Press.** Post-colonial theorists unmask the survival of a colonial *habitus* in today's societies, while gender theorists worry about Bourdieu's over-deterministic nature of the habitus. See: Barry Hindess, 'Metropolitan Liberalism and Colonial Autocracy'. In Jean Hillier and Emma Rooksby (eds.) (2005) *Habitus: Sense of a Place*. Ashgate: Burlington, pp. 117–130; Judith Butler (1997). *Excitable Speech.* New York, NY: Routledge; Margaret Archer (2007). *Making Our Way through the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[4] Ronald Beiner (1982). *Political Judgment*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press; Ronald Beiner and Jennifer Nedelsky (eds.) (2001). *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics.* Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield; Peter J. Steinberger (1993). *The Concept of Political Judgment*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press; Alessandro Ferrara (2008). *The Force of the Example.* New York: Columbia University Press; Leslie Paul

Thiele (2005). *The Heart of Judgment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; María Pía Lara (2007). *Narrating Evil.* New York: Columbia University Press; Linda Zerilli (2005). '"We Feel Our Freedom": Imagination and Judgment in the Thought of Hannah Arendt'. *Political Theory* 33(2): 158–188; **Albena Azmanova (2012) *The Scandal of Reason*. New York: Columbia University Press.**

[5] I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for inviting me to clarify this matter.

[6] Ferrara (n. 4).

[7] Bourdieu has fiercely criticised Habermas's idealising and rationalistic political theory throughout his career. For a systematic analysis of the differences between Bourdieu's reflexive sociology and Habermas's critical theory, as well as a provocative attempt to reconcile the two perspectives by merging them into a hybrid account see Simon Susen (2007). *The Foundations of the Social: Between Critical Theory and Reflexive Sociology.* Oxford: The Bardwell Press.

[8] Hannah Arendt (1967). 'Truth and Politics'. In *The New Yorker*, February 25, 49.

[9] Hannah Arendt (1992). *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[10] Zerilli shows how Arendt herself left underexplored the power of imagination as a power crucial for breaking the boundaries of identity-based experience. Zerrili, (n. 4), p. 174.

[11] Arendt (n. 9), p. 43.

[12] O'Neill argues that while reflective judgment could benefit from some strategies (enlarging one's mentality, discussing others' appraisals, revising our own), these do not determine judgment Onora O'Neill (1986). 'The Power of Example'. *Philosophy* 61(235): 5–29.

[13] 'Practical wisdom is embodied learning mindful of its own limits'. Thiele, (n. 4), p. 112.

[14] Lara discusses 'semantic shocks' as innovative uses of language that move our moral powers by using words in radically novel ways. Examples are 'the banality of evil' and 'totalitarianism', and 'der Musulmann.' Lara, (n. 4). Alexander's 'the new Jim Crow' is another example (n. 1).

[15] Hannah Arendt (1998) *The Human Condition*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press. For the role of storytelling in retrospective historical judgments in Arendt see Lisa J. Disch (1993). 'More Truth than Fact: Storytelling as Critical Understanding in the Writings of Hannah Arendt'. *Political Theory* 21(4): 665–694 and David Luban

(1993) ‘Explaining Dark Times: Hannah Arendt’s Theory of Theory’. *Social Research* 50: 215–248.

[16] Beiner (n. 4), pp. 142–143.

[17] Beiner (n. 4), pp. 144–148; Ferrara (n. 4), p. 37; Ingerid Straume (2012) ‘A common world? Arendt, Castoriadis and political creation’. *European Journal of Social Theory* 15(3): 367–383, 374.

[18] Beiner (n. 4) and Ronald Beiner, “Interpretive Essay” in Arendt (n. 9), pp. 89–156.

[19] Beiner (n. 4), p. 163.

[20] Jenny Nedelsky (2001) ‘Communities of Judgment and Human Rights’. *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 1: 1–38.

[21] Nedelsky (n. 20), p. 30.

[22] Ferrara (n. 4), p. 31.

[23] Alessandro Ferrara (2014) *The Democratic Horizon*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter ‘Reasons that move the imagination: politics at its best’.

[24] Ferrara (n. 4), p. 55.

[25] Ferrara (n. 4), p. 33.

[26] Ferrara, (n. 4), p. 119. Aristotle adds the goodness of character, the strength of arguments, and skills in engaging the audience’s emotions as variables determining the success of judgments. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1356 a: http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.html (accessed 13 May 2013).

[27] **Ferrara (n. 23).**

[28] **Ferrara (n. 23), pp. 44–50.**

[29] Ferrara (n. 4), p. 4.

[30] **Azmanova (n. 4).**

[31] **Azmanova (n. 4), p. 12.**

[32] **Azmanova (n. 4), pp. 223, 235. More will be said about this in the third section of this paper.**

[33] Bourdieu, Pierre. (1990) ***The Logic of Practice.*** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 25.

[34] Bourdieu, (n. 33), p. 53.

[35] Pierre Bourdieu (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 86.

[36] Bourdieu, (n. 33), p. 59.

[37] Pierre Bourdieu (2000) *Pascalian Meditations*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 175. **In his course on the state, Bourdieu discusses the state as a meta-field that conditions and makes possible all other fields. Pierre Bourdieu (2012) *Sur l'état: Cours au Collège de France 1989 – 1992.* Paris: Raisons d'agir/Seuil.**

[38] **' … les agents sociaux ne sont pas simplement des particules mues par des forces physiques, ce sont aussi des agents connaisants qui sont porteurs de structures**

cognitives .' ('… social agents are not just particles moved by physical forces, they are also knowing agents endowed with cognitive structures.' Translated by the author.) Bourdieu (n. 37, 2012), p. 262.

[39] Bourdieu, (n. 37, 2000), p. 98.

[40] Bourdieu is very critical of internalist approaches to language – such as those proposed by Saussure, Chomsky or Habermas – because they neglect the socio-historical processes behind dominant languages and are oblivious to the different levels of authority associated with different modalities of speaking. Pierre Bourdieu (2005) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Polity Press, 90–102.

[41] Bourdieu, (n. 35), p. 94. The attention to affective investment and the physical dimension of *habitus* is what distinguishes Bourdieu's sociological theory from Marxist modes of critique. For a treatment of this issue see Lane (n. 2).

[42] **John B. Thompson, (2005) 'Editor's Introduction'. In Thompson, (n. 40), 13.**

[43] Pierre Bourdieu, 'Political Representation: Elements for A Theory of the Political Field'. In Thompson (n. 40), pp. 171–203.

[44] Bourdieu points to the implausibility of both optimistic and pessimistic accounts of the subversive potential of the people. Bourdieu (n. 37, 2000), p. 173. For an account that challenges Bourdieu's views on subversion lies see Nick Crossley (2003) 'From

Reproduction to Transformation. Social Movement Fields and the Radical Habitus'. *Theory, Culture & Society* 20(6): 43–68.

[45] See also, Pierre Bourdieu (2005). 'The Mystery of Ministry: From Particular Wills to the General Will.' In Wacquant (n. 2), pp. 55–63.

[46] Pierre Bourdieu (1991) 'Universal Corporatism: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World'. *Poetics Today* 12(4): 655–669.

[47] Bourdieu, (n. 43), p. 176.

[48] **Bourdieu (n. 46), pp. 655, 665–667; Bourdieu (n. 37, 2012).**

[49] A case where the heretical language should be understood literally – rather than just metaphorically – is the case of nationalist or regionalist struggles for autonomy and the recognition of distinct identities. In using patois to reveal and construct a group, leaders make visible, officialise and institutionalise new political frontiers. They are successful in their redrawing of the linguistic and ethnical boundaries within the political community to the extent that their discourse a) corresponds to objective reality of various affinities between the members of the group and b) is publicly recognised as authoritative. See Bourdieu in Thompson (n. 40), pp. 221–224.

[50] **Pierre Bourdieu (1996) *The Rules of Art* Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 252; Bourdieu (n. 46), p. 668.**

[51] **Bourdieu (n. 50). Chapter "A Question of Method'. This conception appears to have strong gramscian connotations. However, Bourdieu explicitly rejects the model of the 'organic intellectual'. He claims that the radical differences between the *habitus* of the dominated and the *habitus* of the intellectual makes the latter an unlikely fellow traveller or spokesperson for the former. Bourdieu thinks that similarity in the position of being dominated will make intellectuals feel solidarity with the politically dispossessed. However, he thinks intellectuals need to first attend to their own interest as a group and protect their own independence against the state's, the market's and the media's encroachment. (Bourdieu, n. 46, p. 668 and n. 50, p. 348). I thank the anonymous reviewers for inviting me to clarify this point.**

[52] Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant. (2007) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 137.

[53] Bourdieu, (n. 37, 2000), p. 54. **For a contrast, compare this to the way in which Bourdieu theorises the role of the prophet in religious revolutions. Pierre Bourdieu (1991) 'Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field'. *Comparative Social Research* 13: 1–44.**

[54] Lane shows how Bourdieu oscillates between a Leninist and a Socratic model for the intellectual. According to both models, however, the intellectual is meant to raise

awareness, something that Bourdieu thought was insufficient, given the embodied nature of the habit (n. 2), pp. 62–65.

[55] Pierre Bourdieu (1988) *Homo Academicus*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 190–191.

[56] In order to democratize the emancipatory power of scientific reflexivity, Samer Frangie tries to construct a political habitus of reflexivity on the model of Bourdieu's socio-analysis as reflected in his political involvement. Frangie, (n. 2), p. 226. As I will show further on, I want to resist the idea that sociological knowledge is the pre-requisite for good political judgment.

[57] Pierre Bourdieu (2003) *Firing Back.* London: Verso, pp. 20–21.

[58] Bourdieu, (n. 46), p. 661.

[59] Bourdieu, (n. 57), p. 24. **Bourdieu opposes the collective intellectual to both Sartre's total intellectual and to Foucault's specific one. For a detailed critique of Sartre, see Bourdieu, (n. 50), pp. 184–190.**

[60] Reading Bourdieu and Arendt together is not unprecedented. Using Bourdieu's concept of taste, Feldman seeks to offer a more complex understanding of the enlargement of mentalities. He argues that putting oneself in somebody else's shoes can be a shattering experience for the individual's identity, with effects on political engagement. Leonard C. Feldman (1999) 'Political Judgment with a Difference:

Agonistic Democracy and the Limits of "Enlarged Mentality"'. *Polity* 32(1): 1–24. Keith Topper also cross-pollinates the work of Arendt and Bourdieu and shows how differentiated linguistic competences can contribute to the silencing, exclusion and domination of some individuals and groups. Keith Topper (2011) 'Arendt and Bourdieu between Word and Deed' *Political Theory* 39(3): 352–377.

[61] Thiele writes: 'If practical judgment is to be cultivated in contemporary times, our attention must be redirected to the corporeal nature of thought and the hidden strengths of embodied mindfulness'. (n. 4), p. 286.

[62] Thiele believes that emotion makes us responsive to the others: when we judge we try to imagine how others might think and feel about a particular issue. (n. 4), pp. 186–189. This idea is not generally endorsed by all theorists of judgment.

[63] I cannot provide here a discussion of the universal nature of Ferrara's vision of human flourishing. For the purpose of this paper it suffices to say that seeing beyond the limits of the local shared identity and reaching for this vision does not come as easily as he appears to assume, even for those living in democratic communities.

[64] Azmanova (n. 4).

[65] Azmanova (n. 4), p. 210.

[66] Wacquant mentions the role of artists as critical thinkers. Loïc Wacquant (2004) 'Critical Thought as Solvent of *Doxa*', *Constellations* 11(1): 97–101.

[67] Bourdieu (n. 50).

[68] Crossley (n. 44).

[69] Sharon R. Krause (2001). 'Bodies in Action: Corporeal Agency and Democratic Politics'. *Political Theory* 39(3): 299–324, 299.